



22 May 2017

70th Session of the World Health Assembly

Agenda Item: 15.5 Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity: implementation plan

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, which represents more than 9 million physicians worldwide.

We acknowledge WHO for their work, and leadership on childhood obesity, and NCDs more broadly. As evidenced by the WHO report, more common action is needed such as engagement of Members States, technical support of WHO, and more cooperation with Civil Society and health professions.

The double burden of malnutrition affecting the world's children has seen a recent shift with over 42 million children under the age of 5 estimated to be overweight as of 2015. We as a global community must act to address this issue to prevent the devastating consequences of NCDs, both now and into adulthood, for their families and communities.

The WMA supports the global action plan to halt the rise in obesity by 2020. We believe that childhood obesity may not be tackled by single intervention, and therefore, we recommend that all parties partake in multi-sectorial, and collaborative efforts to end childhood obesity.

The WMA urges Member States to consider childhood obesity prevention as national and public health priority, to identify and develop population-based approaches, and to regulate the availability of food and sweetened beverages by imposing sugar tax, limiting its accessibility in media, educational, and healthcare facilities. A good example would be the ban of sale of sugar-loaded drinks in Latvian schools. We also ask governments to address obesity through a comprehensive program with a specific focus on children that includes initiative on price and availability of nutritious foods and access to education.

As front line healthcare professionals, we are committed to ending childhood obesity and address this public health challenge. We advocate for a considered and holistic approach, based on common risk factors, considering the social determinants of health.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Word count 300